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# THE GEOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

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## ALSACE-LORRAINE AND EUROPE

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[With separate map, Pl. VI, facing p. 112.]

On both sides of the ocean men of authority have proclaimed that the Alsace-Lorraine question was pre-eminently one of justice. It is also, on account of the geographical situation of the country, a matter of general concern to all Europe and, consequently, to the rest of the world in so far as it affects the world's peace.

Such are the conclusions that are drawn in a book that has recently appeared, a book full of facts and of ideas relative to present events.<sup>1</sup> The author, the late Professor Paul Vidal de la Blache, was one of the master geographers of our times. He had always devoted himself to tracing the influence of nature on political and economic history. This philosophy of geography finds a new field in his book. Not one of its pages but "reveals the circumstances under which it was written. How indeed could it be otherwise? Yet I assure you this is not an 'opportunist' volume." Were it necessary to substantiate this statement with which Professor Vidal de la Blache prefaces his work it can be pointed out that he has already treated of several of the theories he expounds in his "La France: Tableau Géographique."<sup>2</sup>

The following pages have been largely inspired by his "France de l'Est," and the writer has borrowed freely from it.

### The Land

Alsace-Lorraine is the name the Germans have given to the territory wrested from France in 1871. This territory included all of Alsace and a third of Lorraine.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Vidal de la Blache: *La France de l'Est (Lorraine-Alsace)*, Colin, Paris, 1917. Abstracted in the *April Review* (Vol. 5, 1918, pp. 328-329).

<sup>2</sup> Hachette & Cie., Paris, 1908; also, without illustrations, as the first volume of Lavisse's "Histoire de France," 1903.

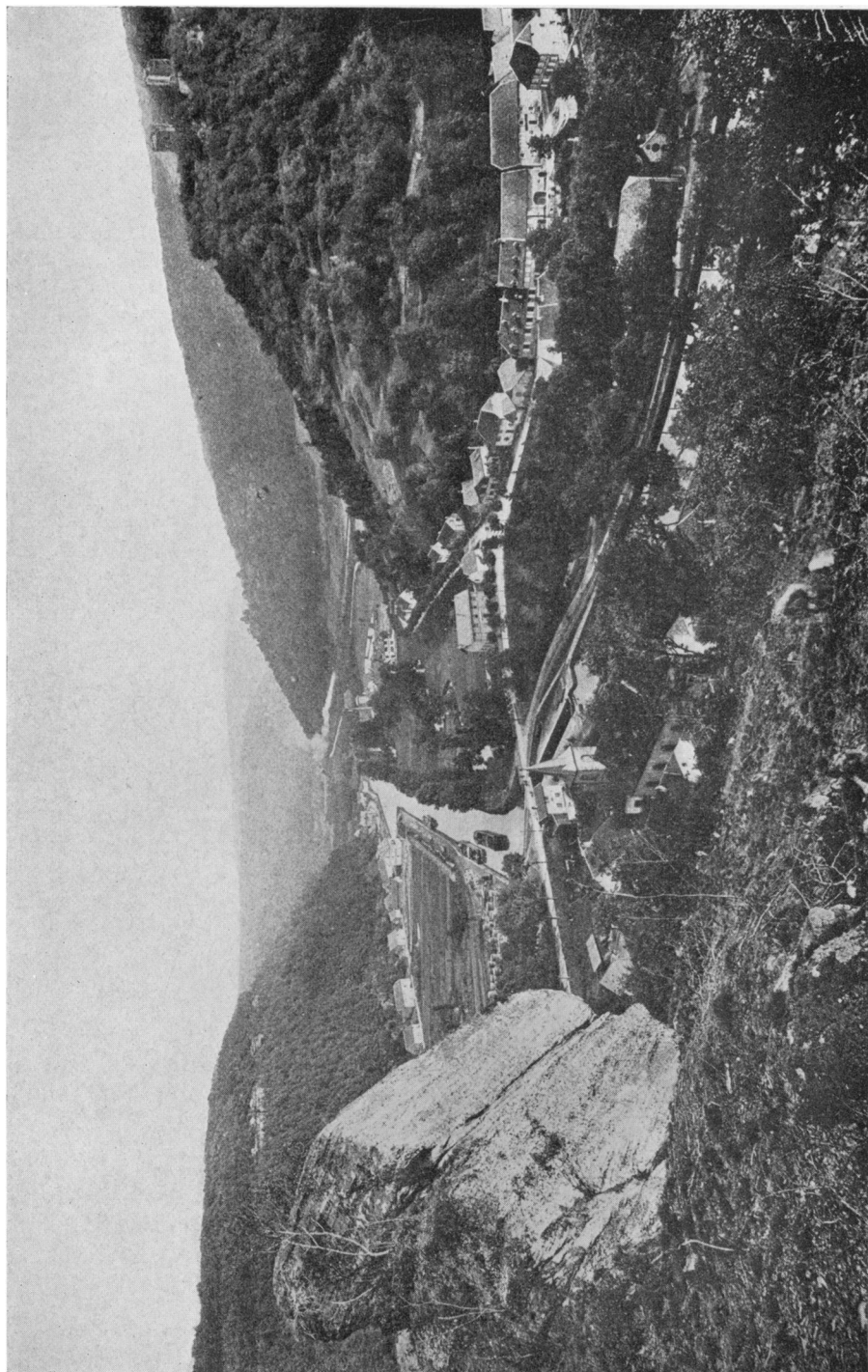


FIG. 1.—The Marne-Rhine Canal, built by the French Government and completed in 1854, at Lützelburg, its highest point in the crossing of the Vosges.

## PHYSICAL CONFIGURATION OF ALSACE

Alsace and Lorraine, however, are in reality two distinct countries. Alsace is a part of the long plain through which the middle Rhine flows between Basel and Mayence,\* but within this unit it occupies a separate position, the size of the stream and the swiftness of its current up to the very outskirts of Strasburg being a barrier between the two sections of the plain. Although Lake Constance serves to regulate the flow of the Rhine, the Aar River, which reaches it below the lake with the waters from a large part of the Swiss Alps, tends to keep its regimen torrential. Its gradient is steep as far as its confluence with the Ill (1 in 1,000). From this point to Mayence it is only 0.25 in 1,000.

Before its waters had been confined by dikes or levees the river often overflowed its banks, and the sediment deposited by these floods long ago still covers the land along its banks. Only forests will grow on this meager, sandy soil. No towns in Alsace were built on the river's banks. Strasburg, which reaches to the Rhine nowadays, was originally built on both sides of the Ill. Alsace and Baden's only means of communication up to the middle of the nineteenth century, when the railroads came into existence, were pontoon bridges. These were withdrawn in time of flood.

Northward the Alsatian plain continues as that of the Palatinate. Its limits are indefinite, being set by some at the Lauter River, by others at the Queich, the stream on which lies Landau. There are great forests there which cover almost the entire country.

The Vosges in the background were also an obstacle for a long time, at least the really mountainous portions, from the high domes of the Ballons in the south to the Donon in the north. The range is not an elevated one (its highest peak, the Ballon de Guebwiller, is not more than 4,667 feet), but its sides are covered with splendid forests of beech and spruce even at the present time. Only the peaks over 3,900 feet high rise above the timber line, which, for an isolated range, is an exceptionally low one.

## PHYSICAL CONFIGURATION OF LORRAINE

Lorraine has much more variety. Geologically a part of the great Paris Basin, it is composed of concentric zones which form a series of steps from the Vosges to Champagne. Each one has a different aspect. First there are the limestone and marl plains, on which are spread the sandy deposits brought down by the streams from the mountains. Then rises sharply the escarpment of the Côtes de Moselle, a flange, as it were, to the limestone plateau which overlooks the Moselle between Metz and Diedenhofen (Thionville) and gradually recedes from it northward and then swings west. A wide forest belt covers this meager, calcareous soil up to its junction with the

\* On the accompanying map (Pl. VI) place names are spelled according to the dominant language of a given region. In the text the form commonly used in English is employed for such places as Strasburg, Cologne, Treves, etc. Towns in the German-speaking section of Alsace and Lorraine are given in the German form, with the French equivalent added in parentheses when they are first mentioned.—EDIT. NOTE.

humid marl soil of the Woëvre. Back of this rises another limestone ridge, the Côtes de Meuse, also crowned with woods, running parallel to the Meuse, which the fortress of Verdun guards. These uplands of little relief continue toward the west until they reach a third salient line, the Forest of Argonne, which separates Lorraine from Champagne and is continued southward by low and wooded plains.

But Lorraine, although lying in the Paris Basin, is also a separate district. Her two great rivers, the Moselle and the Meuse, instead of flowing toward Paris turn to the Rhine. Only the waters of the Barrois district, of which Bar-le-Duc was the capital, join the Marne and flow toward Paris.

These two countries, which turn their backs on each other, thus had no common ground from which a political group could evolve. It is a remarkable fact that the Alsatian plain has never furnished the framework for a feudal state. In the tenth century it was attached to Swabia, beyond the Rhine, but this union, which did not take the natural obstacles into consideration, could not endure. They were in any case an ill-assorted pair, for the Alsatian has an age-old antipathy to the Swabian, whom he calls "Schwob," including in the term all his neighbors to the east.

As to Lorraine, in spite of the efforts of her dukes, she never included all of the country we now know by that name. Even though they managed to obtain Barrois by inheritance in the fifteenth century, the bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun always escaped their covetousness.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

This "infirmity of structure" has proved a heavy burden upon the destinies of the two provinces; they have found themselves argued and fought over, torn between east and west, between Germany and France.

Alsace and Lorraine, however, communicated easily enough with each other in the north by means of the Zabern gap (Col de Saverne), which was always one of the great highways of travel between the Marne and the Rhine. This far northward the Vosges can no longer be called mountains, and the forest itself is only a fringe a few miles wide.

From Pfalzburg (Phalsbourg) on the Lorraine upland at an altitude of 1,102 feet there is a gradual ascent to 1,351 feet, then a descent of 596 feet to Zabern in the Alsatian plain. This is the route taken today by the highway, the railroad, and the canal which joins the Marne to the Rhine.

But Lorraine is in easier communication with the countries to the west and south. There is a natural passage between the Moselle at Toul and the Meuse at Commercy which evades the obstacle of the Côtes de Meuse. It is, as Professor Davis has shown,<sup>3</sup> an ancient stream bed through which the Moselle formerly ran to the Meuse. Toul owes its importance to this passage, from which highway, railroad, and canal draw equal advantage.

<sup>3</sup> W. M. Davis: *La Seine, La Meuse et La Moselle*, *Ann. de Gèogr.*, Vol. 5, 1895, pp. 25-49 (also in English in *Natl. Geogr. Mag.*, Vol. 7, 1896, pp. 189-202, 228-238; and in W. M. Davis: *Geographical Essays*, Boston, 1909, pp. 587-616).

Nancy later grew up on this same line of communication, the transverse axis of Lorraine.

Southward Lorraine communicates still more freely with Burgundy, by the upper valley of the Saône. Between the Vosges and the Plateau of Langres, a southern extension of the Côtes de Moselle, the way is wide open. There is a gentle descent from the plateau where the Meuse rises to the basin where meet the headwaters of the Saône. The Saône empties into the Rhone, which in turn flows into the Mediterranean. As early as Roman times a plan was formed to dig a canal uniting the Saône with the Moselle, a project which was not executed till the nineteenth century. The divide, west of Épinal, is only 1,198 feet in elevation.

#### ENTRANCE OF ROMAN CIVILIZATION

By this great opening the Roman road which starts at Lyons easily reached the Rhine by way of Toul, Metz, and Treves. One of its branches diverged toward Rheims and continued toward Boulogne, the port of embarkation for Britain. Another branched off in the plains of the Saône and, following the Doubs valley, entered Alsace by Belfort between the southern margin of the Vosges and the first foothills of the Jura. At this point the Rhine plain merges with that of the Saône, Alsace with Burgundy. Nowhere in western Europe is communication more easy between the region whose waters flow to the Mediterranean and that which sends its waters toward the North Sea. The city of Basel is on the Rhine at the end of this natural passageway.

The Roman roads were to the first centuries of our era what the railroads are in our times. Along these roads traveled not only men and merchandise but also ideas. They were the arteries by which Latin civilization penetrated to the Rhine. Rome was more in evidence here where her legions were encamped along the Rhine face to face with the barbarians than she was in other parts of Gaul. Numerous relics show that Alsace and Lorraine were thoroughly imbued with her civilization. The Latin tongue replaced their ancient idioms.

#### THE GERMANIC INVASION

But in the fourth century the barrier gave way and the tide of Germanic peoples overflowed into Gaul. It is probable that the invaders remained in greater numbers in the countries contiguous to their ancient frontier, since the Germanic idioms there superseded the Roman tongue. The city of Metz, however, which had become strongly Latinized, proved impermeable to the new vernacular. Even to the present day the linguistic boundary makes a wide sweep around the city from Diedenhofen on the Moselle downstream towards the Donon, the last high peak of the Vosges. Even in a number of the Vosges valleys on the Alsatian side French is still the current language. Doubtless the invaders scarcely penetrated into this

forested region.<sup>4</sup> Four centuries later Charlemagne essayed to reconstruct the Roman Empire. He marched from Gaul to overcome the countries beyond the Rhine. His ephemeral empire resulted at least in carrying Christianity to the farthest confines of the Slavic world and in binding Germany to Rome by this spiritual link.

#### ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF LORRAINE

How soon this empire was disrupted is known. In 843, at Verdun, the grandsons of Charlemagne divided their heritage into three parts, the East Frankish Kingdom, which has become Germany, the West Frankish Kingdom, which has become France, and between the two a long stretch of territory which extended from Rome to the mouths of the Rhine, a curious state which comprised the most varied populations and had no possibility of enduring. No better name was found for it than that of the prince to whose lot it fell: the Kingdom of Lothaire, *Lotharii Regnum*, from which comes the name of Lorraine. The application of this name became more and more limited as the territory to which it was first given dwindled, until at last it indicated only the little Duchy of Lorraine. If a more logical partition had been made, especially one more in accordance with geographical conditions, the course of history for centuries would doubtless have been different. The two neighboring kingdoms ceaselessly disputed with each other the possession of parts of this Kingdom of Lothaire. Flanders, Alsace, and Lorraine have become fields of battle where France and Germany contended, or more accurately, where met the principles represented on the one hand by Central and on the other by Western Europe.

#### ALSACE AS A CROSSROAD

When the countries beyond the Rhine had definitely evolved from primitive barbarism new routes were opened to commerce. These always followed the pathways predetermined by nature, and Alsace became the crossroads. Through Basel she could easily communicate with the Danube and the great Alpine passes; by Mayence and Frankfort, with Hesse and Thuringia, which in turn connect with North Germany. The Rhine played its part as a navigable waterway.

#### THE POSITION OF STRASBURG

Alsace and Lorraine thus became transit lands. Strasburg particularly profited by all this commerce. The "City of Roads," as its name indicates, occupies a remarkable position. It is situated at the outlet of the Zabern gap route; it lies near the Rhine, where the river, here more tranquil, begins to become navigable; it is built on both banks of the Ill, the pre-eminently Alsatian river, which follows the plain for three-quarters of its

<sup>4</sup> See Leon Dominian: *The Frontiers of Language and Nationality in Europe*, American Geographical Society, New York, 1917, Pl. II.

length and receives the greater part of the waters flowing from the eastern slope of the Vosges. Strasburg thus became in the Middle Ages a sort of merchant republic.

#### THE POSITION OF METZ

The position of Metz is no less favorable to commerce. Located on the Moselle, which here divides into several branches and consequently is more readily crossed, it is in easy communication with the plateaus of the left bank through the ravines which cut into the Côtes de Moselle. Eastward no obstacles separate it from the gently rolling upland which extends to the Zabern gap. The shortest road from Paris to Strasburg is by way of Rheims, Verdun, and Metz. This is the route today of a railroad, the alternative to that which passes through Bar-le-Duc, Toul, and Nancy. Even the little Meuse cities of Neufchateau and Verdun achieved an importance by this commerce which they have since lost.

#### FERTILITY OF THE COUNTRY

This commerce also drew its sustenance from within the country itself. Although the Rhine and the streams descending from the Vosges have in some places left unfertile gravelly deposits on the Alsatian plain, everywhere else thick beds of loam, of that loess whose name is nowadays given to all similar soils, lend themselves admirably to the cultivation of cereals. Sheltered by the ramparts of the Vosges, a continuous zone of splendid vineyards occupies the foothills. The marly upland of Lorraine also grows large crops; more fertile still are its deeply entrenched valleys. On the alluvial soil of the Moselle valley, near Metz, flourish bountiful vegetable gardens, and on the valley sides are vineyards and orchards bearing delicious fruit. "These Alsatian and Moselle regions have what the sterile schist and sandstone terranes which surround them lack; they abound in what is wanting in those foggy plains which end in the northern seas. In comparison with these they seem like favored lands, lit by more brilliant skies, rejoicing in sunnier autumns, in a more smiling aspect of nature. Alsace's tobacco was principally marketed in Germany; her grains fed part of Switzerland; her wines were bought 'by Frisians and Morini,' wrote a chronicler of the eleventh century; those of Lorraine and Barrois found purchasers in the Electorate of Liège. The Rhine transported to the Low Countries timber from the mountains and brought back in exchange merchandise from beyond the seas."<sup>5</sup>

#### EASE OF COMMUNICATION WITH PARIS

But all these ways that diverged to the north, south, and east, converged on the other hand in the west, in the Paris Basin, following the slope of the land, and the entire system was connected at Paris with the highways from Flanders. The railroads and canals today follow the same natural

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<sup>5</sup> Vidal de la Blache, work cited in footnote 1, p. 16.



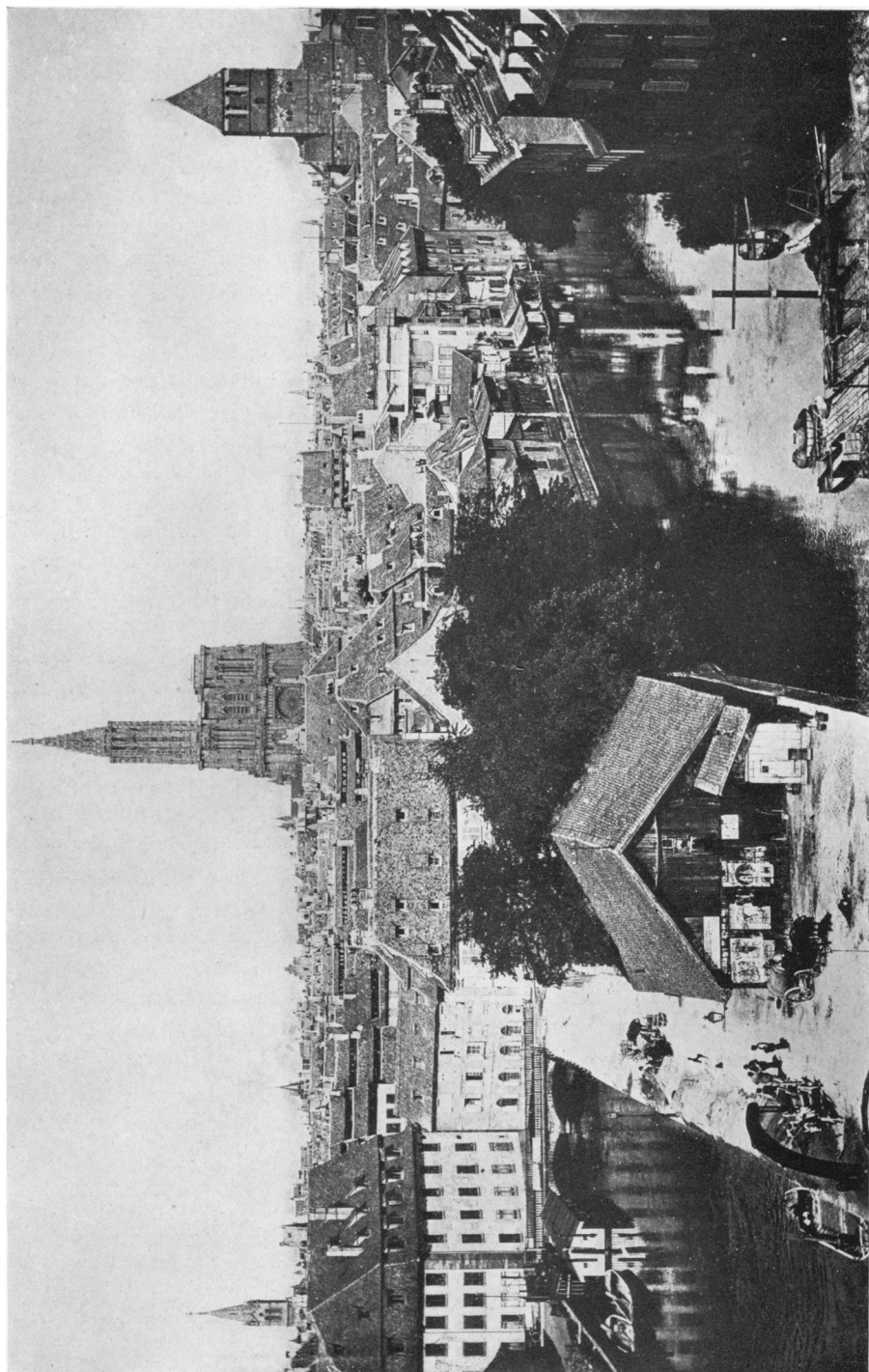


FIG. 2—Strasbourg: The old part of the town dominated by the spire of its Cathedral. In the foreground two arms of the Ill.

routes. "The great open region giving access to the sea by way of Rheims or Paris is the most direct way by which Mülhausen (Mulhouse) can supply its factories and Lorraine ship its iron, and it is by this route that those bonds which bind men in a common understanding have slowly been forged, more by the interchange of ideas than of merchandise."<sup>6</sup>

### Union with France

The various parts of the region under consideration became in succession united with France: part of Barrois in the fourteenth century; the three bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun in the sixteenth; and what remained of Lorraine in the eighteenth. With the other French provinces which had either peacefully or by right of conquest come under French dominion they gathered in turn about the capital, as though by some natural attraction. The parts dispersed during feudal times seemed destined once more to be united; ancient Gaul tended to reconstruct her former boundaries.

Without entering into minute historical details it is nevertheless fitting to show with what facility these successive annexations were accomplished and how little rancor or regret they left in the minds of those concerned.

### METZ AND ITS FRENCH CHARACTER

The city of Metz was a sort of independent republic, as was Strasburg. Although nominally a part of the German Empire it did not pay tribute, and it had always refused to permit the decisions of its courts to be reviewed by an Imperial tribunal. Occasionally the burghers of Metz, disturbed by the ambitions of their neighbors, the Dukes of Lorraine on the one hand and the Kings of France on the other, reminded the Emperor that he was their protector, but when that same Emperor attempted any curtailment of their liberties, they resolutely placed themselves under the aegis of the King of France. Identity of speech made relations with France exceedingly easy. It has been noted that Metz was always a French-speaking city. Indeed the oldest official records in the French language known to be in existence came from this ancient town. All her chroniclers wrote in French. Her magistrates, whenever they came into official relations with Germany, had to have recourse to translators.

### HOW METZ CAME TO BELONG TO FRANCE

After the Protestant princes of Germany had been defeated in 1547 by the Emperor Charles V in their revolt against his religious authority they implored the assistance of the King of France, Henry II. In return for his help he was to be allowed to occupy the French-speaking cities of the Empire, Cambrai, Toul, Verdun, and Metz, and was to retain possession of them as a "Vicar of the Holy Empire." This was done. On April 15,

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<sup>6</sup> Vidal de la Blache, work cited in footnote 1, p. 17.

1552, the King of France entered Toul, without protest from the inhabitants; a few days later, on April 18, he took Metz by surprise. The burghers, espousing the cause of the Protestant princes, took the oath of fealty to him on April 21, reserving only "the rights of Empire."

The blow was a severe one to Charles V. From October to December, 1552, he besieged the city, but in vain, and was finally obliged to return to Germany with the remnants of his army. Thus Metz became French with the consent and, one may say, with the co-operation of its inhabitants, who have always been very proud of this memorable siege. It was commemorated by an inscription carved on one of the principal gates of the town. The Germans obliterated this after they came into possession in 1871. By June, 1553, the King of France had also taken possession of Verdun. In 1684 the German Empire by the Treaty of Westphalia surrendered all claim to these three bishoprics.

#### HOW ALSACE BECAME FRENCH

In the course of the religious wars which the Treaty of Westphalia brought to a close, Alsace also had come under French sovereignty. Both parties had called upon other nations for assistance, the Protestants addressing themselves to Denmark, to Sweden, and finally to France. Alsace was at that time only a heterogeneous assemblage of small states. Ten of the cities had formed a league called the Decapolis. Strasburg was not in this; nor was Mülhausen, which was allied to the Swiss Cantons. These small Alsatian states were also divided between Protestantism and Catholicism, and naturally the Protestants united with France. The Swedes, however, had so ravaged the country—recollections of this time still persist among the peasantry of Alsace and Lorraine—that the Catholics themselves had begged the aid of France, and had surrendered to her Zabern and Hagenau. As a consequence of all these various arrangements, Alsace was "placed in trust" in France's hands as the price of her intervention. After the treaty of peace was signed in 1648 she remained French, all but the city of Strasburg.<sup>7</sup>

#### STRASBURG

Whether or not France had the right to occupy Strasburg in 1681, under the clauses of the Treaty of Münster, is a matter of dispute; both sides can be upheld. The old diplomacy excelled at introducing intentionally obscure articles into a treaty, leaving an open door for all manner of future evasion. Louis XIV profited by equivocal phrasing, to be sure, but it must be conceded that it would have been difficult for Strasburg not to have cast in her lot with the rest of Alsace sooner or later. The Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 acknowledged the *fait accompli*.

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<sup>7</sup> And Mülhausen, which remained independent until 1798 and then joined France of her own free will.

### HOW LORRAINE BECAME FRENCH

The Duchy of Lorraine became French, at least in anticipation, by an arrangement concluded in 1737. Her situation was a singular one. Hemmed in between France and Alsace, cut in two by a great highway belonging to France which connected Zabern and the three bishoprics, it had only a shadow of its former independence. The last duke, Francis III, was at that time suing for the hand of Maria Theresa, daughter of the Emperor Charles VI, in the hopes of inheriting from him the Imperial

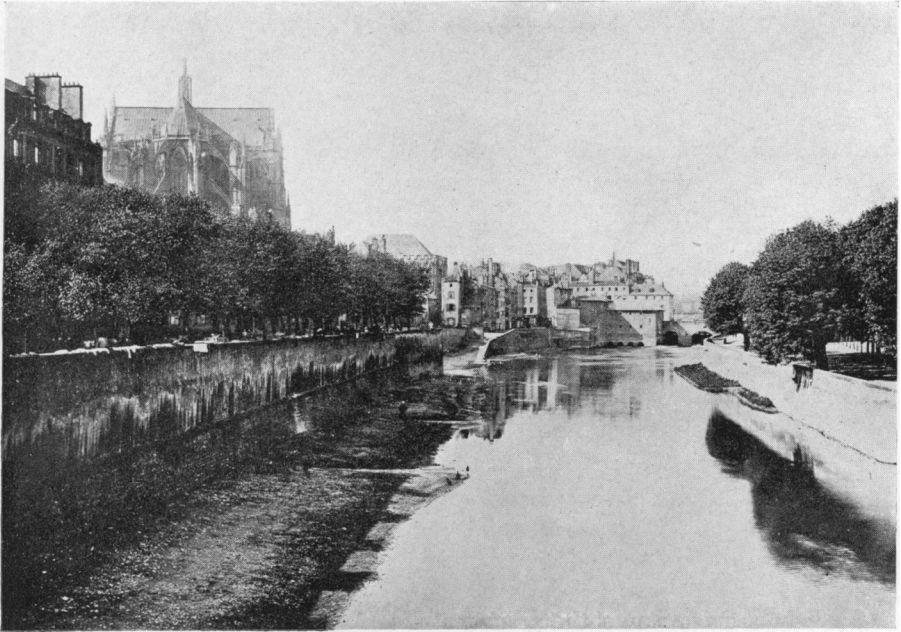


FIG. 3—An arm of the Moselle in the inner part of Metz. The Cathedral on the left.

crown. He understood that France would not tolerate so dangerous a neighbor<sup>8</sup> and voluntarily exchanged the country of his fathers for the Duchy of Tuscany. The duchy was given to the dethroned King of Poland, Stanislas Leszczynski, father-in-law of Louis XV, on the condition that it should revert to France after his death. Stanislas' reign was in reality a period of transition. Lorraine, which had been governed since 1737 by French administrators, was scarcely aware of any change of rule when she became incorporated into the Kingdom of France in 1766.

### THE CASE OF ALSACE

It is not surprising that French-speaking countries such as the three bishoprics and the greater part of Lorraine should easily have become

<sup>8</sup> The Duchy of Lorraine had been declared independent in the Treaty of Nuremberg in 1542. Its duke had then ceased to be a German vassal and become a sovereign. If Francis III had kept Lorraine in becoming Emperor, it would have become once more a German dependency.

united to France. Their previous connection with Germany had been the result of treaties which were concluded without taking racial affinities into account. But the Alsatians, on the other hand, spoke a German dialect, and it is really remarkable that they should have joined her so quickly.

It has often been said that Alsace did not become really French until the time of the Revolution. Impartial testimony, however, shows that the understanding between France and her new conquest was developed gradually in an atmosphere of reciprocal good will. First and foremost Alsace was assured of the peace which she so greatly needed after the terrible ravages of the Thirty Years War. She felt herself protected; and, until the conclusion of the wars of the Empire, the distress and anguish of being invaded were hers no more. She was above all most intelligently, even admirably, governed. The French *intendants* who were sent to her came without any pre-determined policies, anxious only to assure, together with the authority of the King, the welfare of the people confided to them. The cities maintained their old municipal institutions. The numerous German princes who owned lands in Alsace continued to collect taxes and to dispense justice in their own names. They were only required to acknowledge the sovereignty of France. Alsace, as well as the three bishoprics and later Lorraine, even remained outside the French customs area and could thus continue to carry on freely the transit commerce which enriched her. This provision was in force until 1789, when the manufacturers and merchants of Alsace and Lorraine, who were beginning to feel the disadvantages of this law, complained that they were cut off from commerce with the great French markets and asked for its abolition.

#### THE GERMAN LANGUAGE

It may seem strange that France did not for a long time make any serious effort to discourage the use of the German language. The few measures that were taken to assure the recording of the laws in French were not strictly complied with, and French schools were not opened until the eighteenth century. In those days, however, the artless idea that language in itself is the symbol and proof of national spirit did not exist, though in ours it has become a weapon of war. The French Government cared very little whether or not the Alsatians used a German dialect, provided they remained faithful subjects of the French King. Rather than force them to an abrupt change of their habits and customs, it prudently left time to take its course. Alsace and Lorraine have since known other methods!

#### A HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

There was only one important innovation, one which made a profound impression on the people. This was the institution of a sovereign court of justice, which was to be a court of appeal for all the small local jurisdic-

tions. French justice became synonymous with equal justice for all. The old democratic ideals of the Alsatian peasant were thus realized, and his confidence was gained in anticipation of the time when his heart would be won as well.

#### GRADUAL FUSION

“Thus fusion between two peoples predestined to mutual comprehension took place gradually without constraint or force and was all the more complete since it was accomplished by natural means. Gentle and continuous pressure welded together the various parts of the body politic. While little by little apparently divergent interests converged, a common ideal of civilization was also uniting the people in spirit. They learned to think and to feel alike, if not to speak alike.”<sup>9</sup>

#### THE PART PLAYED BY THE REVOLUTION

The French Revolution completed the union of elements. The breath of liberty carried away all special privileges and leveled all barriers. The injustice of laying taxes on the peasant to support alien princes who did not even reside in the country was done away with. Truly democratic regulations took the place of a whole network of petty laws which had discouraged all initiative. The number of small landowners was increased by the distribution of communal properties and the sale of lands belonging to the Church, which had been accumulating inordinately for centuries. Free exchange of goods with the French markets gave an impetus to manufacturing. Organized like the neighboring French *départements*, represented as they were in the national assemblies, and by men who often played a leading rôle there, Alsace and Lorraine came to have a full consciousness of being part of a great nation. The French language made more progress in a few years than it had in the previous century.

One of the most significant chapters of Professor Vidal de la Blache's book is entitled “The Revolution and the Spirit of the Frontier.” The very closeness of the connection with France threw into relief the differences that existed between Alsace-Lorraine and the outer world. Under the old régime the commercial relations of the two provinces had kept them in a sort of marginal existence. Their people had become accustomed to living in somewhat loose contact with the rest of the Kingdom. In ordinary affairs of trade and in the matter of language the relations were with Switzerland or the Palatinate, with Frankfort or Basel. In the noble families it was quite a common thing to go from the service of France to that of the Empire and *vice versa*. This was all changed as soon as intercourse with France was no longer confined to the aristocracy or to the merchants and the great masses of the people came to know and appreciate each other.

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<sup>9</sup> Vidal de la Blache, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

The boundary, which had been a mere line of demarcation, suddenly became a barrier. The results of that type of civilization which distinguished France from the rest of the world became apparent in a flash. The frontier had become a spiritual frontier.<sup>10</sup>

#### THE DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOTISM OF THE PEOPLE

The contrast between the new régime and that to which Germany was still passively submitting grew more obvious every day. The greater part of the Alsatians and Lorrainers who distinguished themselves in the army and reached high rank were from the middle class and even from the populace. Lefebvre was the son of a miller of Rufach; Ney, the son of a cooper of Saarlouis (Sarrelouis). What a lesson in democracy was taught by these careers! It must not be assumed, however, that these eastern peoples joined light-heartedly in all the Imperial adventures. The volunteers went enthusiastically to war in 1791 in defense of liberty; but after the Treaty of Lunéville in 1802, when victory was assured, the general desire was for the peace which was so greatly needed. In regard to these sentiments, Ehrenfried Stöber, a citizen of Strasburg who wrote in 1814, has left an eloquent testimonial. "Our conscripts," he said in speaking of the wars of the Empire, "left their homes with less eagerness than the Badenens, who started for Spain or for Russia at a sign from Bonaparte. But we are proud of our zeal in the Revolutionary wars. Yes, we fought valiantly then with our fellow-citizens, Frenchmen from all the provinces." This same Stöber, who was a writer of German verse, was anxious that there should be no doubt as to his patriotism. "My lyre is German," he wrote, "it resounds with German songs, but my sword is loyally French and loves the Cock of Gaul"—

*Meine Leier ist deutsch; sie klingt von deutschen Gesängen.*

*Liebend den gallischen Hahn, treu ist französisch mein Schwert.*

The inhabitants of this eastern part of France were hard-working people, firm in their democratic convictions, pacific but intensely patriotic, independent in spirit but with respect for law and order, seemingly unemotional—particularly in Lorraine—but capable of the utmost devotion to great causes and noble tasks. In Alsace the use of French became general in the educated classes. French was the language in which the historian Fustel de Coulanges and the great Pasteur taught at the University of Strasburg. The two principal newspapers which expressed and guided public opinion were *L'Industriel Alsacien* in Mülhausen and *Le Courrier du Bas Rhin* in Strasburg. The first was published entirely in French, the second was bilingual. In the villages all the old soldiers spoke French. The language also came little by little into more common use in the schools, although the government continued a policy of non-interference (which was perhaps carried too far) out of regard to the wishes of

<sup>10</sup> Vidal de la Blache, pp. 79-80.

the clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, who looked upon innovations unfavorably.

#### CESSION TO GERMANY IN 1871

Thus the two provinces were living in peace and happiness when the war of 1870 broke out. It was with stupefaction that they heard, as soon as the preliminaries of peace became known, that their cession to Germany was under consideration. The Government for National Defense had been improvised after the fall of the Empire, but not regularly instituted, so that it was necessary in order to conclude a valid treaty of peace to elect a National Assembly, which met at Bordeaux. Although their country was in the hands of the enemy, Alsace and Lorraine unanimously elected deputies who favored carrying on the war. Heading the lists was the name of Gambetta, the personification of resistance. Is it necessary to recall the solemn and touching protest which the two sacrificed provinces made? Without a word of complaint, with thanks to those who had defended them, they voiced their infinite sorrow and their unshaken hope and proclaimed in the most emphatic and most sublime words the world has ever heard the inalienable right of peoples to dispose of themselves.

#### PROTEST AND EXILE

Three years later, in 1874, the annexed provinces were allowed for the first time to send deputies to the German Reichstag. Fifteen were elected. These men unanimously protested against Germany's abuse of power and in the presence of her representatives proclaimed their attachment to France.

The provisions of the treaty allowed the people of the provinces to retain their French citizenship providing they left the country before October 1, 1872, and a sorrowful exodus of those who could not endure to submit to German domination began. This continued long after the official date and in fact has never wholly ceased. The number of these exiles can only be estimated, for Germany has never made the figures public. It can not be far from 500,000, or more than a quarter of the present population, which in 1910 was 1,874,014.

Such are the facts against which Germany's persistent but unproven assertions cannot prevail. A few courageous voices have been raised even in Germany in defense of the truth. Bebel, who had never ceased to protest against the great wrong that had been done, said as late as 1907 in the Socialist Congress at Stuttgart: "Alsace and Lorraine revolted against the idea of separation from France because they had participated in her development for centuries, because they had benefited by the victories of the great Revolution, because, from a cultural point of view, they were closely identified with the spirit and traditions and soul of France." We have nothing to add to this declaration.



## Rise of the Industries of Alsace and Lorraine

### MODEST BEGINNINGS

For a long time the two provinces, Alsace and Lorraine, remained purely agricultural. They had a few industries, but these were of minor importance. The oldest was salt mining. The salt is found in the subsoil of the Lorraine upland plain, in a comparatively narrow belt about thirty miles long which extends on both sides of the frontier from the neighborhood of Nancy to Saarlalben (Sarralbe; see map, Pl. VI). Before the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was obtained by evaporating the waters that were drawn from the rich salt stratum below. It was not until a later date that borings were made and the methods improved, particularly after several soda factories were installed in the vicinity. Several small foundries and later some glass factories sprang up here and there, particularly on the Lorraine slope of the Vosges mountains, whose forests were used for fuel. For a long time iron had been obtained from the ores which crop out on the sides of the Côtes de Moselle. In the eighteenth century all these industries still bore the traces of their modest origin.

### THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

The textile industry which has developed to such an extent on both sides of the Vosges owes its rise to Mülhausen. In 1746, in imitation of the factories at Basel, a plant was started for the manufacture of what was known in those days as painted linen, that is, material on which designs were printed. It was soon found necessary, in order to supply this industry, to install spinning and weaving machinery. Labor was cheap in the Vosges valleys, and linen cloth had been woven there for a long time. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, the making of cotton cloth was also introduced. It was in this manner that the textile industry gradually spread through all the Vosges valleys that opened towards Alsace, later invading those on the Lorraine side. The simple weaving done in the home by members of the family was superseded by factories which utilized the natural water power of the mountain streams. These were built progressively farther up the valleys as the result of the increasing improvement in the use of water power brought about by the invention of the turbine. A movement in the opposite direction has taken place since, and nowadays the factories are built on the plain because of better transportation facilities. The manufacturers of Mülhausen have excelled in intelligence, initiative, and energy. The first steam engine in Alsace was used in Mülhausen in 1812. The first railroad was opened in 1839 between Mülhausen and Thann. The manufacturers were profoundly cognizant of the social solidarity that modern industrial organization has created between employer and employee, and of the duties of the employer to those under him. This is another bond between France and Alsace.



FIG. 4.



FIG. 5.

FIG. 4—The Moselle valley just above Metz. In the background the Côtes de Moselle, surmounted by forts.  
 FIG. 5—A small industrial town on the Alsatian slope of the Vosges: Ste. Marie-aux-Mines (Markirch).

## THE NEW IMPETUS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, in spite of the progress which had been made, industries only held a subordinate position in the two eastern provinces. No city in 1846 had 100,000 inhabitants. Only five had more than 20,000. These were Colmar (20,050), Mülhausen (29,415) and Strasburg (71,992) in Alsace; and, in Lorraine, Nancy (47,765) and Metz (55,112). At this time the construction of through railroad lines and of the Marne-Rhine Canal (1854) and the Coal Canal (1866) gave a new impetus to manufacturing. Coal began to be used instead of wood in the foundries, and coal mining was begun in Lorraine south of Saarbrücken (Sarrebruck). Machine and textile industries increased, and as a result the country population was attracted to the cities; Mülhausen nearly doubled the number of its inhabitants between 1846 and 1866 (58,773 in 1866).

## EFFECTS OF THE TREATY OF 1871

The treaty of 1871 surprised Alsace and Lorraine in the midst of this period of industrial development. The economic unity of the country was shattered. The annexed region was deprived of its outlet in the French market, and the part that was left to France did not seem capable of maintaining unaided industries of its own similar to those by which it had prospered. How were the textile mills of the Lorraine slope of the Vosges to exist without the thread spun in Alsace on which they had depended? As for the metallurgical industries they were almost all in the hands of Germany. Yet the two provinces managed to survive this crisis. In order to keep their position in the French market and thus continue in commercial relations with France, most of the organizations in Alsace and Lorraine duplicated themselves in French territory. Some of the factories located near Belfort and in the Vosges. The foundries likewise erected branches on French territory or else moved over bodily. Those of Moyeuvre in the valley of the Orne extended over the frontier as far as Joeuf; those of Ars-sur-Moselle, near Metz, were rebuilt at Pompey, near Nancy, at the confluence of the Meurthe and Moselle. Thus, of the two parts of the region, that which heretofore had the lesser industrial life was stimulated. The Vosges particularly profited by the new blood that had been introduced into the country. Belfort nearly doubled its population between 1872 and 1876, Épinal and St. Dié also grew, but a little more slowly, for the cotton mills established themselves by preference in villages or small towns as they had done in Alsace, which was an additional point of similarity between the eastern and western slopes of the mountains. In spite of opposition on the part of the German government, there was established and maintained across the frontier an interchange of enterprise, of capital, and of men.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> From 1888 to 1891 a passport, which had to be viséed by the German Embassy in Paris, was required for entry into Alsace from France. The Embassy had full power to issue or to refuse the pass.

## MINERALS AND METALLURGY

It took some time, however, for the country to regain its equilibrium, and its marvelous industrial development did not begin until somewhat later. When it did come it was, as elsewhere, the result of the great strides that had been made in the science of metallurgy.

About 1880 an extension of the Lorraine iron ore deposits was discovered on French territory under the plateau of Briey. Like most of the Lorraine ores, they contained a trace of phosphorus, which made them almost useless for the manufacture of steel. But the discovery made by Gilchrist Thomas in 1878 of a method for dephosphorizing the molten metal obviated this earlier difficulty, and huge works with the most modern equipment sprang up in Lorraine on both sides of the frontier. Between the blast furnaces and the mine shafts ran a network of railways and overhead cables. Lost in the midst of all these activities the little villages began to look like relics of the past. Nearby, in the mill towns, a heterogeneous population assembled, Italians, Flemings, and Poles, for the country alone could never have provided enough labor to supply the demand. In the *arrondissement* of Briey, before the war, the foreign element had become more numerous than the native born.

The exploitation of petroleum on a commercial scale was begun in Pechelbronn, Lower Alsace. In 1904 in drilling in the forest of Nonnenbruch, west of Mülhausen, deposits of potash were discovered which are far superior to those of Stassfurt in Saxony. Immediately steps were taken to make this wealth available. Eighteen pits were in operation or being sunk when the war broke out.<sup>12</sup> Modern industry on a large scale was now finally in possession of Alsace and Lorraine.

## GROWTH OF THE CITIES

One of the principal results of this transformation was to hasten the exodus of the country population to the cities.

Strasburg had, in 1910, 178,891 inhabitants. It owes its importance less to its rôle of capital city of Alsace-Lorraine than to the development of its commerce and industries. Even though the ancient city, huddled about the old Cathedral with its soaring spire, still preserves its narrow streets and its high gabled houses and its atmosphere of long ago, new sections have sprung up all about it.

The foremost source of growth was the creation of a great port of commerce out of the nearby swampy land adjoining the river. It already disputes with Mannheim the title of being the head of navigation on the Rhine.<sup>13</sup> This achievement was due to the obstinate perseverance of the Chamber of Commerce, in which old Alsatians predominated. Strasburg

<sup>12</sup> This discovery is of particular interest to the United States, which is Germany's most important market for the sale of potash as a fertilizer.

<sup>13</sup> The tonnage passing through the port, which in 1872 amounted to 270,000, rose from nearly 1,000,000 in 1909 to 2,700,000 in 1914.

thus tends to regain her old place as a transfer point, to which she was destined by her geographical position, despite the determined resistance of the state of Baden, on whose territory Mannheim is situated, and the ill will of the Empire, which was not disposed to allow the interests of the old German states to be subordinated to those of Alsace-Lorraine.

Mülhausen continued to progress but not so fast as in the middle of the nineteenth century. Together with Dornach, which was consolidated with it, the population had reached 100,000 before the war.

In the annexed part of Lorraine the population massed itself about the factories in the valley of the Moselle between Metz and Diedenhofen. Metz, in 1910, had a population of 68,598, and if the suburbs be included, nearly 95,000. This large figure is due to the enormous garrison stationed there (25,000 men, including the suburbs). Living apart from the industrial activities of the surrounding country, the unfortunate city has now become a mere barracks; its old bourgeois families have all emigrated and it remains denuded and defiant. Nowhere else has the burden of annexation been heavier or more unendurable.

In the part that remained French, aside from Belfort (39,371 inhabitants in 1911), Épinal (30,042 inhabitants), and the little industrial towns in the Vosges, Nancy is the principal point of interest. The erstwhile elegant capital of the Dukes of Lorraine has gained since 1871 all that Metz has lost. In 1911 its population was 119,949. The discovery of the deposits at Briey is due to her scientists and engineers, and her rise dates from this period. Through the activities of her commercial banks and of her Chamber of Commerce, with the aid of her university and scientific institutions, she has methodically, without haste or friction, proceeded "in the Lorraine manner" to develop her wealth. Today she is reaping the benefits of a geographical position whose advantages she had been slow to appreciate. She is one of the regional metropolises of France.

## Rise of German Industries and German Imperialism

### RAPID TRANSFORMATION

While this evolution was taking place on both sides of France's eastern frontier, Germany also was undergoing a transformation and a much more rapid one. Her tremendous development is due primarily to the exploitation of her coal. From 1880 to 1913, her production of coal and lignite rose from 53,000,000 to 277,000,000 tons.<sup>14</sup> That of England during the same period only rose from 149,000,000 to 286,000,000 tons. Once established as a great industrial power, Germany ceased to send out into the world those hordes of immigrants which had between 1880 and 1883 totaled annually 200,000 or more. Thereafter the migrations took place

<sup>14</sup> Of which 80,000,000 tons were lignite. This lignite, which is mined in the Cologne region, has one-third of the calorific value of coal. It is made available for industrial use by mixing it with bitumen to make briquettes.

within the realm, from the country to the cities, to the detriment of the former. The number of Germans living in the cities had, by 1895, become greater than those in the rural districts. Germany was compelled to get from abroad the labor she needed, not only for her factories but also for her fields. Before the war 275,000 Slav workmen crossed her eastern frontier every year to work in the estates of the great landed proprietors of the east.<sup>15</sup> The majority of these were Poles, and it can be seen what interest Germany would have in seeing her own dominion or that of Austria-Hungary extended so as to include Poland.

#### GERMAN PROJECTS OF EXTENSION AND DOMINATION

Great industries make imperative demands. To realize on their enormous invested capital and provide for amortization, they must constantly enlarge their production and extend their market. When the home markets no longer suffice, others must be sought outside of the country. Germany exercised all her ingenuity in finding outlets, and if she did not exactly invent the system of dumping she practiced it on a large scale.

Foreign markets, however, are always precarious, for a country that is threatened with industrial invasion will manage to protect itself. How much safer to stay within one's own domain! So the idea of extending her domain became an obsession with Germany. Her geographers began to enunciate the theory of space, *Raum*, considered as a fundamental principle, as a condition necessary to the vitality and prosperity of a state. A league for the extension of Germany was formed which soon became a power with which the leaders had to reckon.

It is obvious that great extent of territory is an advantage, that a large country with all the resources that it can command is better equipped for war than a small country that depends upon the assistance of its neighbors for its very existence. But this theory of extension of territory presupposes the fact that the territory is unoccupied. The United States has been able to spread out over almost an entire continent because that continent was practically uninhabited. Germany could not spread out similarly in Europe without engaging in conflict with her neighbors; and outside of Europe, in the colonial field, the best places had already been pre-empted.

The great material prosperity of Germany was one of the results of the founding of the Empire, which had brought about a unification of all Germany. Prussia owed her dominion to her military successes; she had won it by force. The idea of force as a necessary weapon for all material progress naturally allied itself with the idea of territorial extension. The theory of space was supported by that of force.

Thus developed the conception that Germany has tried to materialize through the present war. To extend her boundaries in every direction by

<sup>15</sup> 274,443 during the economic year 1911-12; 279,833 in 1912-13, of whom 259,413 were Poles (*Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich*). The economic year runs from October 1 to September 30.

actual or indirect annexations; to surround herself with satellites who were no longer free except in outward seeming; to reach out to the eastward, where she anticipated less resistance and hoped to draw into her orbit Austria-Hungary, the Balkan States, and the Turkish Empire; and even to reach the Indian Ocean—this was her ambition. The building of the Bagdad Railway was the most obvious outward sign of it. The dream of Hamburg-to-the-Persian-Gulf came near to being realized.

#### RIGHTS OF NATIONS

Opposed to this conception is a totally different one, founded on a respect for the rights of all nations. This theory does not exalt so-called economic necessities above all other interests. It realizes that nations are realities, having the right to live; that political boundaries are not necessarily obstacles to the currents of trade but that on the contrary the close interrelation of interests nowadays makes a good understanding among nations more necessary than ever. "The group idea," says Professor Vidal de la Blache, "must replace the idea of the state in the conduct of the world's affairs."

The great American Revolution set forth this right of peoples to be the masters of their own destinies. It became the doctrine of the French Revolution. Lazare Carnot enunciated this principle in his instructions to the ambassadors of the Republic. "Nations in their relations with each other stand on the same ground as do individuals in private life," he wrote; "like them they each have certain rights, and natural law demands that these rights shall be mutually respected."

#### THE SPIRIT OF WESTERN EUROPE

This noble idea that justice should rule among peoples as it does among individuals outlived the follies of the First Empire and inspired most of the political changes that took place in Europe between 1815 and 1860, such as the independence of Belgium, the liberation of Greece, and that of the principalities along the Danube. It has found its most powerful champions among the Western Powers. In France and England of the time originated most of the movements of popular sympathy toward subject races. The two Governments were not always on the happiest terms, it is true, and the *entente cordiale* suffered many an eclipse; but there, in those two countries, shone the far-reaching light of liberalism. Thus manifested itself the influence of a long civilization in common, all the more forcefully as England increasingly evolved toward democracy.

Western Europe, which has had the advantage of a continuous development without prolonged interruption since Roman times, is "an aggregation of nations with their own personality, conscious and jealous of their autonomy. Numerical or territorial inferiority does not in any way diminish the ardor of their national self-consciousness. It is kept alive by

historic memories, the sacred heritage transmitted from one generation to another. Holland and Switzerland find in the recollection of their struggles for independence, Belgium in her vigorous municipal life, Portugal in her ancient colonial glory, the sacrament that rallies and sustains them, and they would look upon their absorption by another power as the ultimate disaster.’<sup>16</sup>

‘A society where man, either as an individual or in his relations to a particular group, is accorded that respect to which he is entitled deserves to be considered superior to one where man’s personal independence is subordinated to ends determined upon by an entity called the State. The principles which Western Europe has adopted as the basis of its political existence and which she imparted to the New World are not a starting point, to be outdistanced, but a goal, an accomplishment—the focus of the converging tendencies of a long civilization. The happenings in the world today show that Germany has consistently kept herself aloof from these principles.’<sup>17</sup>

### European Importance of Alsace and Lorraine

France’s position in this group of Western nations that rallied almost instinctively at the first signs of peril was somewhat different from that of all the rest, for it was against her frontier that the power of German expansion was hurled and it was eastern France which was at stake, as indeed it has been for the last century, ever since Prussia has dominated Germany.

### THE ADVENT OF PRUSSIA

Prussia is a late comer in the lands along the Rhine. In the seventeenth century the Duchy of Cleves, along the lower part of the river near the Low Countries, and the County of Mark, farther eastward on both sides of the Ruhr, came by inheritance into the possession of the House of Hohenzollern—a heritage, to be sure, which had long been a matter of controversy. The lands were distant ones having no connection with the kingdom. The Congress of Vienna in 1815 rashly installed Prussia in Treves, Coblenz, Cologne, and Aix-la-Chapelle, in those Rhine provinces where she was not wanted and where she had no right to be. At once her passion for conquest asserted itself. The Treaty of Paris of May 30, 1814, restored to France her boundaries as they existed before the Revolution and gave her the greater part of the Saar valley, with the fortress of Saarlouis, built at the end of the seventeenth century for the defense of Lorraine, as well as the Saarbrücken coal fields, which French mining engineers had been studying with a view to their systematic exploitation. By the second Treaty of Paris, November 20, 1815, Prussia managed to

<sup>16</sup> Vidal de la Blache, *op. cit.*, pp. 206-207.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.



have assigned to her not only the Saarbrücken coal basin but also the French lands of Saarlouis. She would have liked to acquire even more. This first amputation made a breach in the frontier of France.

### THE SAARBRÜCKEN COAL FIELD

Concerning the too little known reasons which influenced Prussia to claim the Saarbrücken basin, Professor Vidal de la Blache brings some evidence to bear whose importance cannot be overlooked. The most interested advocate of these claims was a man named Böcking, who was born at Trarbach on the Moselle in 1785 and was educated in the Prussian County of Mark at Iserlohn in the iron district. He had established himself at Saarbrücken in 1808 and had married the daughter of the ironmaster Stumm. When the Prussian plenipotentiaries passed through Saarbrücken on their way to Paris in July, 1815, he had a number of conferences with them, which he later renewed in Paris when he went there as a delegate. The memorial he wrote at that time to expound his views has been preserved. It is manifestly inspired by the Prussian metallurgists of Westphalia, whose mouthpiece Böcking was. "The German provinces," he said, "are dependent on France for salt. Germany pays out enormous sums for it which she could save if by the possession of the coal fields she were in a position to regulate the price of salt.<sup>18</sup> The steel works at Saarbrücken must be taken into consideration also. It is at present impossible for the Prussian steel manufacturers to compete with them, for the French government has put a tariff of 49.50 francs on every 100 kilos of steel imported. If Saarbrücken be given to Prussia France will be obliged to get her steel from us and will lower her tariff to the great advantage of the foundries of the Mark and the lower Rhine provinces."<sup>19</sup>

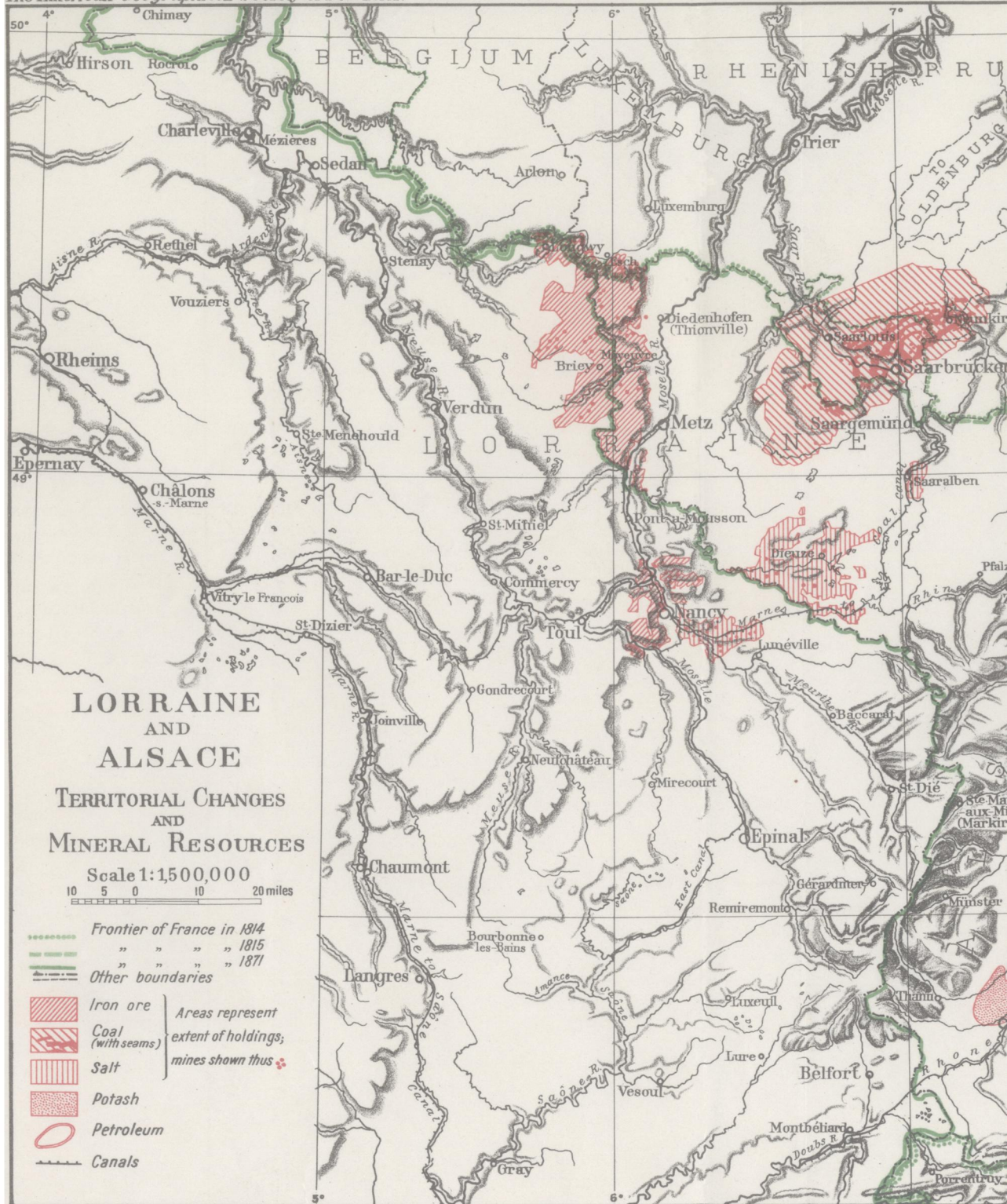
### "RECTIFICATION OF THE FRONTIER"

The treaty of 1871 was to furnish new proof of the extent of German covetousness. The determination of Bismarck, apprised by the engineer Hauchecorne, to wrest from France the greater part of the iron ore districts along the Moselle is well known. At that time the wealth that was hidden under the subsoil of the Briey plateau was undreamed of. Germany of today no longer disguises her intention of taking all of the Briey and Longwy districts; the general convention of the iron and steel industries has recently proclaimed the absolute necessity of this step. Even those apparently most conservative, those who will not hear of annexations, speak of this as a "small rectification of the frontier."

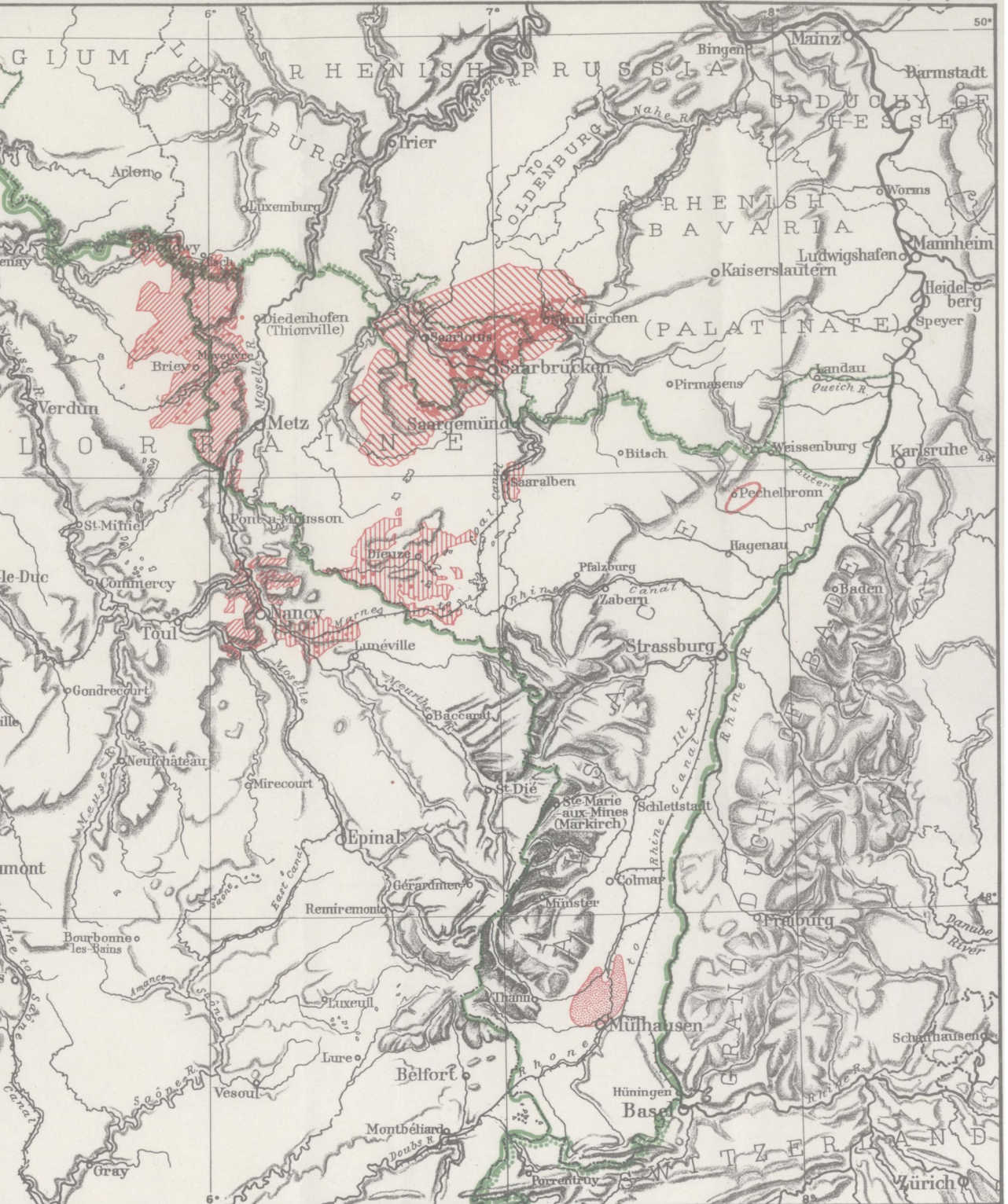
This small rectification of the frontier would put France, and all Europe

<sup>18</sup> This refers to the salt mines of Lorraine, which used the Saarbrücken coal as fuel for the evaporation of the saline waters.

<sup>19</sup> Böcking means the provinces annexed by Prussia on both sides of the Rhine.







with her, at Germany's mercy. Germany's iron and steel production is today much greater than England's (9,000 tons for England against 15,600 tons for Germany in 1913) and is surpassed only by that of the United States (31,800 tons). Germany owes her superiority mainly to the Lorraine ores. In 1913 she mined 28,000,000 tons of iron ores, 21,000,000 of which came from the annexed districts of Lorraine. In the same year her factories used 42,000,000 tons of ore. The annexation of the Briey basin alone would give her 15,000,000 more, and this figure will be greatly exceeded when the mines are fully exploited. The adjoining Longwy basin in 1913 produced 2,700,000 tons; the Luxemburg basin, part of which is already within her grasp, produced 6,500,000.<sup>20</sup> She would then own all the ore, more ore than she needs, just as she now owns all the coal. She could dominate all the metallurgical industries.

#### THE RHINE AS A HIGHWAY OF COMMERCE

The treaty of 1871 assured to Germany another advantage. The Rhine is an international river. It rises in Switzerland and ends in Holland. The Congress of Vienna in 1815 had proclaimed its freedom of navigation, and this principle was confirmed in 1868 at the Conference of Mannheim, in which France took part as a riparian state. As a matter of actual fact Germany since 1871 has been practically mistress of navigation on the Rhine, and this navigation has increased enormously. The tonnage of the Rhine ports below Strasburg, which in 1890 was considerable (25,000,000 tons), reached 83,000,000 tons in 1912. The greater part of this is due to the transportation of ores and coal. Of the 16,000,000 tons imported up the Rhine from Holland, 8,000,000 tons are iron ores. They are ores from Sweden and Spain, brought by sea to Rotterdam and transshipped to barges which take them up to Ruhrort, the great river port of the Rhenish and Westphalian region. From Ruhrort a double stream goes out; 7,000,000 tons of coal go down to the Low Countries, 7,000,000 more go up to Mannheim and, beyond, to Strasburg, which has become the real head of navigation on the Rhine. The projects under way to render the stream navigable as far as Basel, or even up to Lake Constance, are well known, as is the decision recently made by Germany to dig a canal between the Rhine and the Danube. Thus she would have a system of navigation entirely in her possession and to her advantage extending from the North Sea to the Black Sea.

The following passage from the confidential memorandum addressed to the Imperial Chancellor on May 20, 1915, by the six great industrial societies of Germany is noteworthy. "Today coal is one of the most decisive means of influence. The neutral industrial states are obliged to obey the

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<sup>20</sup> Of the 46 blast furnaces in 1913 in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, the Germans owned 27. Of six mining companies there three are German, three are owned by Luxemburgers or Belgians. Of the three most important ones, two are German.

commands of that one of the belligerents who can furnish them with coal." The Rhine today is the highway for all the coal that comes from the Westphalian mines. The possession by Germany alone of a waterway which would be the axis of the Mittel Europa she dreamed of would give her a power of economic domination whose menace to the liberty of other peoples need not be emphasized.

#### THE CANAL SYSTEM AND ITS CONTINENTAL RELATIONS

It is not necessary nor desirable to prevent the union of the Rhine and the Danube or the creation of a navigable waterway which would bring Western and Eastern Europe closer to each other, but it is important that such a waterway should not become a German monopoly. Alsace abuts on the Rhine for about 110 miles and lies along that part of the river which communicates most easily with Western Europe and the Mediterranean. This communication had already been achieved by France during the nineteenth century by means of a network of canals. As early as 1832 she had built the canal from the Rhone to the Rhine, with Mülhausen and Strasburg as termini and a branch reaching to Hüningen, that is to the gates of Basel. In 1854 she finished the Marne-Rhine canal which crosses the Vosges and joins the Rhine to the Moselle, the Marne, and the Seine. In 1866 she opened the Coal Canal, which connects the Saarbrücken coal region with the Marne-Rhine canal. This new waterway made possible cheap transportation of Saarbrücken coal to Alsace and Lorraine. It has been of inestimable value to the Prussian government, which exploited practically all the mines.<sup>21</sup>

This network has partly fallen into disuse since 1871. The Rhine-Rhone canal particularly is of little service at the present time.<sup>22</sup> Has not Europe, nevertheless, an interest in seeing Basel, that great junction of routes, put in touch with Lyons and the Mediterranean by means of the great natural highway afforded by the Gap of Belfort, and also in seeing the port of Strasburg realize every possible advantage from the canals that connect her with all the ramifications of the French system, with Havre and Dunkirk, the North Sea, and the English Channel?

"All the measures that can be taken to establish and maintain intercourse from one end to the other of the continent and to encourage the free interchange of varied influences . . . serve the cause of freedom. We must strive to keep this continent, which could be dammed up and exploited by a single great power, open to reciprocal relations and we must make its every part accessible and more easily permeable."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The costs of constructing the canal were chiefly borne by France—15,640,000 francs as against 3,500,000 paid by Prussia.

<sup>22</sup> Between Mülhausen and Besançon it is now too shallow. The Germans deepened it only between Mülhausen and Strasburg. Work on the branch from Mülhausen to Hüningen was started in 1914, but no agreement was reached concerning the deepening of the canal on both sides of the frontier.

<sup>23</sup> Vidal de la Blache, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-232.

## THE POSITION AND VALUE OF FRANCE

Germany has unmasked other ambitions. She hopes to dominate Belgium, at least economically, to get her hands on Antwerp, which by its canals is one of the outlet ports of the Rhine. She even expects to assure herself of the mastery of all the coast from the Scheldt to Calais. If ever this dream were realized the whole industrial region of northern France would come under German control. Deprived of free access to the ports which it needs, how could it live? France would be crippled in two of her greatest centers of activity, the north and the east, the region of coal and the region of iron.<sup>24</sup>

If France be considered a safeguard of the liberties of Europe, she must keep a foothold on the shores of the North Sea, regain her access to the Rhine, and reopen that series of waterways provided by nature which unite the Rhine to the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. If she be considered of use in bringing about the triumph of those great causes which she has always defended, she must herself remain powerful. Destined by her geographical position to serve as a rampart for Western civilization, she must conserve her resources to assure herself freedom of action.

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<sup>24</sup> 90 per cent of the iron ores in France comes from the part of Lorraine that is still French. Two-thirds of her coal comes from her northern mines.